Eckhart Tolle in Learning Annex San Francisco Living life of inner peace

[Speaker 2] (0:00 - 2:13)

I'm the program director at the Learning Annex here in San Francisco. Welcome. I'm so happy to have you all here tonight for Eckhart Tolle.

At the Learning... Actually, before we begin, I just want to remind everybody, could you please turn off your pagers and cell phones? And to let you know as well, tonight's event is being audio and videotaped, and that's what the blue order forms are.

If you'd like to fill them out, you can put them in the lobby at the registration table. There's boxes for those, and that's to receive a copy. At the Learning Annex, we run over 150 events and seminars every month.

And if you take a look at our catalogs, you will see a variety of classes that we do offer. Tonight, we're discounting those classes $10 if you register. You can do that out in the lobby area where we're selling Eckhart Tolle CDs, books, products, tapes, a whole bunch of things.

Some of our upcoming speakers include Robert Kiyosaki. He is the best-selling author of the book Rich Dad, Poor Dad. In June, we also have Julia Cameron.

She will be here. She is the best-selling author of The Artist's Way, The Vein of Gold, among other books. We also have the great psychic Sylvia Brown coming, as well as James Vaughan Prague in June.

If you watch Larry King, I'm sure you've seen both of them on the show. But tonight, you're here to see Eckhart Tolle. I don't think that I need to tell you that he is the best-selling author of the inspirational The Power of Now.

I cannot tell you the number of people as well who have approached me personally and talked about how much this book changed their life. I know it changed mine. And now, ladies and gentlemen, it is my privilege and my pleasure to introduce to you Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (2:36 - 2:17:33)

Welcome. It seems we are spending this evening here together, except for those of you who have more urgent business to attend to and have to leave early. That's okay, too.

This evening won't be comfortable for you unless you become comfortable with the present moment, because that's all you're getting. And if you don't become comfortable with the present moment, then you may feel the strong urge to leave before it's over. In

search for some other moment, more stimulating, more interesting, some other moment that offers you more than this moment.

And that's a very normal thing to feel that inside. The pull towards the next moment is deep-seated in every human being, in the human mind. It is part of the collective conditioning of the human mind.

And most people live like that all the time, being pulled internally away from this, that movement that pulls you towards the next moment, which I call the psychological need for the next moment. Where is it? And wherever you go, in businesses, institutions, families, you can observe that stress, it translates, it becomes stress, of course, and many other things, the inability to be at home in the now, all there ever is, life itself.

The inability to be at home with all there is, ever, this moment. It's so strange. All other beings on the planet have no problem with it.

Trees, flowers, they love being totally present. The animal. Except a few animals that have lived for too long with humans.

Certain dogs can get very impatient. When are we going to go for a walk? Waiting, waiting.

If they were out in nature, they wouldn't have to wait to go for a walk, but because they live with humans, they have to wait. But on the whole, you can, even dogs that have lived close, very close to humans for thousands of years, there's still an enormous ability in, despite all that, despite certain human traits that sometimes affect dogs, an enormous ability they have preserved to be in the now, to be in a mode of receptivity and openness to celebrate life, aliveness, this moment. And if you have a dog or watch a dog, it is a pleasure to simply watch the openness, the readiness of an animal, like a dog, to celebrate life.

The slightest excuse is good enough. And the owner of the dog, burdened with problems, and what's going to happen next? Not here, somewhere else.

In thought, in the mind, trapped in mind structures, which are future projections. And all that's needed, you only need to look at a dog, some dogs, and they already wag their tails. Just a look is enough, and they respond, alive.

So humans have lost that, and that's only a small part of what they lost. They lost the ability, one could almost say, to be. So lost in doing, so lost in past and future and time, so lost in thought, because that's all that past and future are, mind structures.

They are nowhere else except as thought forms. Past and future are thought forms. Nobody has ever touched the past, except in the present moment, as a memory, a thought form, but only in the now.

Nobody has ever met the future, you can't, because there is no such thing. And humans live as if it were more important than this. Of course, it's a form of madness, but it is so normal that nobody questions it.

That's how everybody lives. You watch TV, they're all doing it. It's so normal.

So you get lost. There are many aspects of being lost, lost in thought. Really, that's what it comes down to, because past and future are thought forms.

So we are here this evening not to add more information to our store of knowledge, because everybody here has more than enough knowledge. It's not that. No more knowledge or information needs to be added to you.

If I tell you that the present moment is all there is, that's not really new information. But you might say, oh, that's a strange thing. Yeah, that's right.

But then you know that you always knew that, so it can't be new information. Of course you knew that the present moment is all there is. You must know that.

So we are here not to add more to our mind, to our thoughts, but to access within ourselves a deeper dimension of consciousness, one could say, a deeper level, a deeper dimension of consciousness that exists in every human being, no matter how lost they are in thought and time and past and future and doing the next thing and the next thing. And you never get there. When is it all going to end?

When am I going to arrive to make it? Just this little bit more. And you never get there.

Because you're so identified with the movement of thought that you're never here, present, to life. So we are here to access a dimension of consciousness that one could say is in every human being, even if they appear mad and confused and in turmoil inside, in every human being there exists a deeper dimension, deeper than thought, a dimension of consciousness deeper than thought, that occasionally comes, breaks through the density of thought. In most humans it occasionally breaks through that deeper level.

And those are moments when that breaks through when you suddenly feel intensely alive. You feel an inner peace and aliveness. The mind might say, I feel so happy, but it's deeper than that.

And that you might then remember as a wonderful moment. And then it gets covered up again by the movement of mental noise that most people are completely identified with. Nothing wrong with thinking, of course, but if that's all there is to your life, the movement of thought, the incessant mental noise, which psychologists, even psychologists who are not interested in necessarily, some are, but interested in spiritual things, have discovered that most of human thought activity, 98% of it or so, is

completely repetitive.

The same old thoughts. And you are forced to think them again and again and again. And they become you.

You are those thoughts. That means to be identified with those old thoughts. And those thoughts are the filter through which you perceive reality.

And through those old conditioned thoughts, you judge and interpret the world around you, other people, events, what happens. But it's all the old conditioning, the old thoughts, reactive patterns, which are part of that. So that your entire sense of self, of me, is bound up with the activity of thinking, plus the emotions that accompany those conditioned thoughts.

Conditioned from childhood on and through cultural surroundings. Your childhood conditioned, even genetically conditioned by the whole history of humanity. Mentally conditioned.

People carry that conditioning around. And identify with that as me. The strange, and this is why life is so unsatisfying for most people, because what they derive their sense of self from, their sense of who I am, is thoughts, plus some emotions that accompany those thoughts.

And that's not very much. And it's all conditioned by your past. But they think that is the self, what Buddha called the self.

And said, this is ultimately an illusion, but people live in that their whole life. That sense of self that is based on thought, includes even emotions. Not that there's anything wrong with thought or emotions, but when they become a self, an identity, a me, that's where delusion starts.

And that's where life becomes very problematic. Because that me that is created by thought, that sense of self, is never, never feels complete. Never feels at ease for very long.

Always needs a bit more to add to me, because I'm not yet enough myself. This is the feeling that almost everybody has. If they look within, there's the feeling I'm not yet fully me.

And on one level, that is true, because there are probably many things that you could still add to your life, and there's nothing wrong with that. You can still learn to play the piano. You can learn other skills.

You can learn a language. You can add new experiences. You can travel to countries, new countries, learn all kinds of things to add to me.

But if you're looking for a deeper sense of self, a more complete sense of me, an improved me, through that, then you won't find it, not for long. And always the sense of not quite enough yet will reassert itself. So there is built into the mind-made sense of identity a continuous sense of insufficiency and lack and not enough.

And this implies the need for more to add to me, in order to be more fully me. And for that, the me needs future. That's why it's so interested in the next moment, because it's through the next moment, it's through future, that it can get the more that it desperately needs to add to itself.

And so humans are condemned to live in such a way, a sense of self that is never enough, that feels uneasy and needs more, compares itself to others and says, they have more, I also want more. Continuous comparison. Does he have more than me?

Has he gotten physically stronger than me? Has he got more possessions than me? Has he got more knowledge than me?

Is he more spiritual than me? Or am I more spiritual than he? Or do I have more?

Do I know more than knowing more, having more, being more? Am I more important or is he more important than me? So that continuous unease when you meet people.

And the need to be superior and the fear of you might be inferior. It's a hard way to live. And so that's the little me, as I sometimes call it, but it feels pretty big, it feels heavy, to carry the burden of the me.

And it needs to strengthen its sense of self through having more, through disagreement, through being right, through reactivity. Everybody here knows someone, acquaintance, friends, who love to have certain enemies, to react against something, to disagree with something or someone. They're looking out for the next thing they can disagree with.

And the moment you disagree, you say, you are wrong. Sometimes these talks, fortunately, I say very little that anybody can disagree with. But nevertheless, some people still manage.

And then there's one little thing, and they, one little statement, and their mind gets in there and says, and then they don't hear the rest of the talk. One hour is gone, but after the hour, a very emotional entity puts up a hand and says, an hour ago you said that, and I completely disagree with you. You're wrong.

And there's an enormous amount of emotion behind that. And it's very satisfying to the mind-made me to be in a position of right-wrong, to be right, to prove someone wrong. And it's enormous what it does in relationships, partners, what they do to each other, in this need to be right, to assert their selfhood through being right.

That means every time you are right, you imagine that your sense of self has grown, and that's what it feels like. You have just triumphed in this argument with someone, and you have blown yourself up. If you really looked inside, you would feel that the body doesn't actually feel very good at all, that there's a blockage in the energy flow in the body, that it feels stuck, there's a tightness.

And yet, to the little egoic entity, it feels good to have blown itself up for a moment, and have triumphed. And then, in a little while, you shrink again, which doesn't last very long, and then you have to look for the next thing to react against. Somewhere is my next enemy.

It could be just a situation that you don't like to be in. You have something to complain about this, perhaps only in the mind. It's enough, it keeps you going.

To complain about this dreadful traffic jam that you are sitting in again. And so, even that is satisfying. It strengthens, even that strengthens the egoic sense of self, because you have made a situation wrong, and yourself right.

The traffic jam is obviously wrong. But, luckily enough, that gives you the opportunity to be right. So, one could almost say that you are morally superior to the traffic jam.

And that's only one little situation. Now, imagine one's whole life consisting of these mind movements, of such situations. Where your sense of self depends on being in some kind of antagonistic relationship towards people, situations, and events in your life.

And that's one single human being. And then millions of whole nations live like that. And then, that same unconscious mind pattern is a collective one, too.

Then you can have an entire nation looking for their enemies. Because only through that, or religions. You can have an entire religion looking for those who don't believe.

Because their sense of self becomes stronger through saying they are wrong, we are right. So the need for enemies is built into that mind structure that we are talking about. And this is on a personal level.

And the need to be in conflict is part of that. And that's strange, because on the surface, the little self says, I want love and peace. It says that on the surface.

But then, when you see how it lives each moment, that you see that in the moment, it doesn't want love. It wants to complain about the traffic jam. It wants to prove that it's right, I'm right.

And you're completely wrong. It wants to show that this is absolutely wrong. This shouldn't be, shouldn't, should, but it is.

But it shouldn't. You are morally superior to reality. You.

You. You. And that's, that strengthens one's sense of self enormously.

And so people go, some have it more strongly than others. Everybody can detect those movements within themselves, but there are some people who are totally possessed by them. And there are some others who are beginning to step out of that collective conditioning.

And this is the people in this room, and many, many others on this planet, still a minority, who are stepping out of deeply conditioned mind movements. Stepping out of an entire sense of identity that is ultimately illusory. And that has created so much suffering on the planet, so much conflict, so much non-peace, because that little or heavy, depending how you look at it, entity that one carries within, so to speak, is threatened by peace.

It doesn't want peace, not for a little moment. I'll give you a little moment of peace, and then can't stand this anymore, because your sense of self, that boundary between me and the rest of the universe, or us, even worse. There's only one thing worse than the egoic me, and that's the egoic us.

If you think criminals are those who inflict suffering on humanity, that's a tiny, tiny, tiny amount of suffering that criminals inflict on other human beings. Most of, 98% of the suffering that humans inflict on other humans are inflicted by very respectable people, citizens. Look at the 20th century, the warfare.

Even concentration camps were built by respectable citizens. And all the unbelievable amount of suffering that was inflicted by humans on other humans in the 20th century alone, and now this is just a continuation, the world situation is just another chapter in that. Isn't there something mad there?

Of course there's something mad. Is there another way? Yes.

What do I have to do? First of all, see the conditioning of that egoic self. Just recognize it, see it.

See it in the history of humanity, see it in the people around you, and see it in yourself, without any blame, because otherwise, what, the ego would love that. They're all dreadful, these egos, they're all around me. And so there are actually humans who say, I hate humans.

The French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre said it beautifully. His saying is usually translated into English as, hell is other people. Literally what he said, the literal translation from French is even better, it's, hell is the others.

And that is a very strong egoic sense of me and the rest of the universe, us and the others. And that must not be lost, that conditioned mind pattern wants to have that rigid

separation between me and the others, us and them, that must stay in place. And in order for it to stay in place, that sense of separation between me and the universe, yes, in order for that internal barrier, that internal sense of separation to stay in place, I need to maintain regularly conflict.

I need my enemies, because if I go without conflict and enemies for too long, this boundary begins to dissolve between me and others. Peace that lasts for too long becomes threatening to that egoic sense of self. Who am I?

It feels so peaceful, something wrong here. I don't know who I am anymore. And so, on an individual level, that is often experienced as the need for unhappiness even.

That people carry that, that continues to be in conflict with situations and people and events is unhappiness. To be in a traffic jam and can be in a complaint, mental complaint about it is unhappiness. To be anywhere and complain about what is, except when you're talking to somebody who can do something about it, please give me fresh food.

You say in a restaurant, this food is off. That's not complaining that I'm talking about. Then the waiter can hopefully do something about it.

Say, this is not right. I asked for a room with a bath and this room has not even running water. So you go talk to somebody who can do something, but if there's nobody who can do anything about it, why complain?

Because the ego loves it. Why complain in the head or talk to yourself about it, talk to other people about it, feel the emotions that go with it. And that's how it's so normal to live like that, to be at odds with, with what?

Reality. I'm against it. What do you think of reality?

I'm completely against it. Of course, reality is ultimately only ever the present moment, but that's enough for the ego because, and here we come to the crunch of it, people started pointing to it at the very beginning already. The ego has an intense dislike of the present moment.

It would rather make it into an enemy or at least try to get away from it, which is also a kind of making it into an enemy. So you have to be very alert within yourself to catch yourself being trapped in that mind movement where you are in conflict with the present moment. And the ego loves it.

But when you see it, this is the beginning of freedom, when you notice in yourself that you are making the only thing there is ever in your life. You're making that into an enemy, this now. You find something in it to argue with, to react against, to disagree with, and even talk about it to yourself or to others.

And then you can see, and then there comes the movement towards future and say, I want something better than this. This shouldn't be. This moment should not be happening.

Of course, there are many dreadful things that happen on this planet continuously, even at this very moment, because of the inner state of humanity. The dreadful things that happen have their cause not in external situations. It looks like that only.

The cause of the suffering that humans inflict on each other and themselves is within, of course. It's within each human being carries that unconscious conditioning inside. And one could almost say they are forced to act it out.

And that's what gives people their sense of personal self. It's totally conditioned. So you have to be very alert in yourself to catch yourself being in an antagonistic relationship with the present moment.

Not saying yes to it, but meeting this moment with an inner no. And imagine living like that for 30, 40, 50, 60 years. Sometimes covered up with a little smile.

But you're just looking for the next thing to react to. And what that does even to your body, what that does to the otherwise harmonious energy flow that nature intended for the body, because what it leads to is a continuous physical contraction. So if you can catch yourself in that inner no to what we could call, and this is a wonderful expression, it goes back to the Buddha really, the is-ness of this moment.

Buddha had the term such-ness. The is-ness of what is now. And how mad it is to fight it internally.

You're fighting against life. And the mind now says, yes, but there may be something happening that's totally wrong. Things happen continuously that the mind could call wrong.

Now this is very important. Now we're coming to the core of the transition from the old conditioned state to what we could call the new consciousness that is already there even at this moment when you observe and recognize your own mind patterns. That recognition, that realization, the observing presence in you is not part of the old conditioning.

And this is why it can feel so liberating even to be sitting here and to be hearing something that one would otherwise say, well, that sounds like bad news. But even in one sense it is, but when you see a deeply conditioned pattern in yourself, you have already stepped out because the seeing is the emerging of something new, a deeper consciousness that sees, that witnesses an old conditioned movement in yourself. So when you sit there, and just to take a simple example, the traffic jam, as is in most people's experience, there are many worse situations, of course, but the traffic jam can

be pretty bad for the ego itself too, to see the moment you are complaining internally, to watch that mind movement and then say, oh, I'm fighting what is.

And you can see also the very same moment you see the futility of being internally not aligned with now, out of alignment internally with now. And now the mind will say, yes, but nothing is ever going to change if I accept everything. This is a silly doctrine.

I heard a mind somewhere saying that. And I'm not going to listen to this for one more minute. The mind will try to tell you that you will become ineffective when you internally become aligned with what is.

You will become, the mind says, totally passive, nothing, you're never going to do anything again, because if this moment is fine, what are you going to do? And the worst thing the mind will tell you is that you are never going to get out of this moment if you accept it. This dreadful moment, you will be stuck in it forever.

One of my favorite films is Groundhog Day. Where one man is stuck in the same day, forced to relive it again and again. And he's one of the most unaccepting people you can imagine.

But gradually, having to repeat the same suffering again, the same day, he wakes up into the same day again and again. Gradually, he just can't resist anymore. He commits suicide, he wakes up again the same day.

And finally, he goes with it. He lets go of inner resistance and he goes with it. And suddenly, he does good things on that day.

Suddenly, he helps people. Suddenly, he becomes a powerful good, because internally he's aligned with what is. And he transforms his entire, the world around him, the town where he's stuck, which he hated so much.

As he begins to accept, he transforms the town. And suddenly, he's out of it. But he doesn't get out until he says yes to it completely.

And this is a universal lesson. It's very deep. True transformation change cannot come into your life unless it's the basis, the absolute foundation for true transformation.

True transformation can only be a transformation of consciousness inside you. Otherwise, it cannot be true. You can achieve all kinds of things.

You can, through thought power even, yes. Through thought power, you could create almost whatever you wanted. You can use affirmations, you can use imagery, you can use, as long as you're not totally unrealistic, you could achieve almost anything.

Well, there are limitations, of course, too. If I probably, if I wanted to become a great pianist, even at my age, it would still be possible. Or everybody would say, the experts

would say, no, you can't.

Yes, it would be possible. Would it make me happy? No.

Would it make to a deeper sense of me, of self? No. Because there will always be others who are better.

And even if I'm the greatest, the time will come when I'm not the greatest anymore, and then my sense of self will suffer. So becoming great at playing the piano makes me happy and fulfilled for a while, and then the same thing does the opposite. So you can achieve things through applied thought.

This is not what our meeting is about, so I'm only going to talk about it for three minutes. If you think and feel that you already have it, and also apply yourself in practical matters, do you actually take action towards it also? It's not enough to shut yourself in a room and think you're going to win the marathon in the next Olympic Games, and never take any external action.

Or do something that is totally out beyond the limitations of your physical vehicle. I could not become heavyweight champion in boxing. No matter how much visualization I do.

And even if I succeeded, of course it wouldn't make me happy. They are not happy. But yes, you can achieve many things, but it will not be true transformation, and it will not fulfill you.

This does not mean don't do it. Do it. Because it's a play.

You play with it. You can play with things in the world of form. Different.

You want a big house? Go and get it. And then you sit in the big house.

And then after a little satisfaction, for a little while, especially if you invite people whose houses are not as big. So that gives some food to ego for a while. But that wears off too, unless you have continuous cocktail parties.

And then you have to compete with others whose houses are even bigger. That's another problem. But after a while, then you sit in the, you made it.

You got the big house, and then you sit there. And then the fulfillment of self that you derive from it begins to wear off. And then the mind comes.

And the beautiful view, you may not even look at it anymore because you've seen it so many times. Oh, well. Yeah, there it is.

And now what? And you wake up in the middle of the night feeling fear. Where does that come from?

I might lose the house. If the stock market crashes completely, I may have to sell it. And then you sit in the big house, and it's not fulfilling anymore.

And then the mind might say, it's not big enough. That's why. So you try and get a bigger one.

Or it says, yes, but the car is not, doesn't go with it. You need a better car. Or the wife doesn't really fit anymore with the house.

I now need a trophy wife to go with the house. And then you can imagine what kind of relationship that's going to be. That is entirely ego based.

You want her to add to you her youth or beauty as an image to be admired with her by others. And she wants something else from you, whatever it may be. Probably the house.

So you play with things on the world of form. It's beautiful. There's nothing wrong with big houses.

They're nice, very nice. You can sit in them, move about, but not such a great deal, really. So once you have played with things, you realize it's not, whatever you can bring about in your life is not such a great deal, even becoming famous.

For many people, I want to come out of obscurity. There's a strange expression. He's living in obscurity.

What does that mean? One magazine said, Suddenly Eckhart Tolle emerged from complete obscurity. I didn't know I lived in obscurity.

But it was in the magazine, so it must have been true. And then I've had a little taste of being famous after living in complete obscurity. But it's not a big deal.

What I love is that so many people are experiencing transformation of consciousness, and that is not, nothing to do with the entity that sits here. It's because simply there's an openness, an opening, so some writing happens through it, some words come through it. That's all.

It's an opening into the unconditioned. And then something new emerges, something fresh, something that can transform the world. But on the external level, being famous is completely meaningless.

People recognize you. It's not even that great anymore if you sit in restaurants and they say, What's he eating? You drink coffee?

You've wrote a spiritual book. You shouldn't be drinking. Oh, sorry.

Now I go to Starbucks with a baseball cap on. So that's, once you, the things seem great

when you don't have them, because then the mind can say, This is going to fulfill you. And then you have to and then you get it.

Is that it? Or you could become even so famous that you can't even step outside anymore. What a nightmare.

But the mind before said, I want to no longer live in obscurity. So you play around with things, get things. You're not going to find yourself in anything that you can achieve, and this doesn't mean you shouldn't play with it, with the world of form.

But if you're looking for yourself in the fame, in the recognition, in the possession, in the relationship, in the experience, even in the knowledge, I can become more and more knowledgeable than I know more than anybody else. That was my identity for a while when I was at university. I didn't have much money.

I didn't have good looks. I didn't have a strong physical body. What was left?

Knowledge. The ego can build itself up through that, and then after a few years I had read enough books, I knew more than most people. I don't anymore.

I've forgotten most things, but at that time, and that felt good to the ego. I could tell them, oh no, you've got the facts completely wrong. But a continuous feeling of unease because there were others, the older professors, they knew much more.

Unease. What do they think of me? Do they think I know enough?

So that's the self-seeking. If you're looking for yourself in the things of this world, in all that, you're never going to find it. So all the things of this world that you can achieve and add to yourself are beautiful.

Play with them. They will come and go. Nothing will stay around for that long.

You can have a house but at some point, it'll go or you go first. Whatever you achieve, after a while, it's not an achievement. You can become president of the United States and then that'll be over after a few years and then you sit there.

That was it. So it's overrated enormously through the mass culture, the external, what achievement or possessions or attainment or recognition can do for you is, that's an illusion that is being perpetrated continuously through the media. It can't do anything for you if you're looking for yourself.

If you play with it, it's beautiful. The world will form. A million dollar comes, a million dollar goes.

Stock market goes up, stock market goes down. One day you sit in a mansion, a little later you sit in a one bedroom apartment. Another chair, less soft.

Walls are a little closer. The view, not quite as good but it feels good to be alive. There's nothing wrong with this moment.

There's an aliveness. There's the sky. There's a little plant.

And I'm alive. You sense that aliveness that you are underneath the movement of thought. I have been looking for that.

What I call aliveness here is very deep. It is also inner peace. There's also a joy in it, a subtle, alive joy which in normal existence people have little glimpses of.

They can get glimpses when the movement of needing the next thing for a moment subsides. And they think why they feel so good for a moment is because they got that thing. That's not true.

Why they feel so good is because the movement of needing the next moment desperately to fulfill me for a little while isn't there. You just bought the BMW and it stands there and you're looking at it and say it's mine. And for a moment you don't need anything anymore because you've got it and you feel good.

You think you feel good because of the BMW. It's nothing to do with that. Where is the goodness in that piece of metal?

No, it's in here. I feel it in here. Yes, but I feel it because this is mine.

No, for a moment the movement of wanting the next thing subsided. I need, I need, I must have. Where is?

Ah, ah. And it doesn't last very long because there's an illusion attached to it. The illusion is it's there.

And then comes the wanting again. So you have glimpses of it and sometimes whenever a sense of well-being is there that means you become at ease with what is. Now.

You feel intensely alive. The movement of thought is not as hyperactive anymore. It's thought begins to slow down as you become present to the now.

And you may sense an aliveness running through your entire energy field. Every cell is alive with life. Aliveness.

So the sense of beingness, aliveness, ultimately what that is, is who you are beyond the mind-made story of who you are. That is never enough. My history, which is what I derive my sense of self from, of course it's not enough.

All kinds of things went wrong along the way in my history. My history, yes, also. My personal history is a succession of mistakes.

And yet not mistakes because we are here. It's brought us here. It's brought me here.

It's brought you here. So nothing was a mistake. But from a purely mental perspective, you could say, why did I do that?

That was a mistake. That didn't work out. And that relationship didn't work out.

And then I failed there. And then I succeeded there. But it made me unhappy.

That's the history of me. But the mind says, yes, all I need is a little bit more of the story to completion. It will get me to completion.

It never happens. The ultimate illusion of completion of the story of me is the wedding. The typical thing you see in films.

Da, da, da, da. And that's the end of the film. They don't show you what happens after that.

So to step out of that, you are not your story. Oh, thank God for that. And no matter what happened in your history, it has taken you to this moment.

It has taken you here all the mistakes. Without the mistakes, you probably wouldn't be sitting here. You would be watching TV.

You must have suffered enough to have come here. And it's great. If I hadn't suffered, I wouldn't be sitting here.

If I hadn't had a nightmare for years living a nightmare, all the things I described were extremely pronounced in me. The dreadful way to live of every moment is bad. But it worked.

It produced enough suffering to suddenly trigger an awakening. And this is why we are here. And sitting here may look on the surface like people listening to a person speaking, but there is something deeper happening.

There is a deeper recognition happening in yourself. First, a recognition of what ultimately is not you, what you thought was you, what gave you your sense of self, is ultimately only mental content, a collection of memories and reactive patterns and thoughts. And that's not that much.

And to realize that that is not who I am. But if you now look very closely, throughout your life, all the different things that happened, and there are many people in this room who have gone through such drastic changes that one could almost say that you have already lived more than one incarnation in one lifetime. In the past, it was more normal to have one single incarnation.

You stayed in the same place and you did the same thing and then you died. That still happens in certain places, but it is more common now for people to go through tremendous changes. And if you look, you might even find that 20, 30 years ago, who you were then seemed very different from who you are now.

And yet, because things have changed, the story has changed. It may not be the greatest story. It still has insufficiency built into it.

It still has lack built into it. But the story has changed. It's not the same story anymore.

And yet, if you look very deeply into the deepest sense of who you are, of I am, where does that feeling of I come from? That sense of something so precious in here, and that's called I. And then saying, I don't want to lose that because there's something so precious here, it's unimaginable that the world could ever be without I.

And that sense of I am, of beingness, of presence, that is at the core of yourself, gets mixed up with memories and with mind movements and with the story. But if you, one could almost say, if you distill from the story of your life the sense of I that remains, even when your life was totally different 20 or 30 years ago, like a different incarnation, even there at bottom, there was still an I, I am. Not the I of the story, but a deeper sense of I am-ness.

That was to you, and this is you, and that was, doesn't change. At the deepest level, the sense of who you are, regardless of what happens in the externals of your life, that changes. Even if you, if tomorrow, if you're, let's say you're a multimillionaire and tomorrow you lose it all, and the day after tomorrow you are penniless, the sense of I, the story would have changed, but the I-ness, I am-ness underneath it would not have changed, or the other way around.

If you win a million dollars tomorrow and today you have nothing, you might sit in a bigger house, have a slightly more pleasant story to tell yourself, and a fictitious sense of self that would have expanded into a bigger house, I have expanded into this mansion, me. For a little while, it feels good, then it goes. But deeper than that is something that never leaves you, which is almost impossible to put into words because it goes beyond anything that language can really speak of.

And language here can only point, can only point to it. You need to sense that, use the pointer, that's the words, and find that deeper sense of I am underneath the story that remained the same. Now the mind says, what is that?

I'll give you another pointer. What other thing is there, so to speak, it's not a thing, what other thing is there that never changed in your life, apart from that deepest sense of I am-ness? What other thing is there that was always the same, that was always there?

The present moment. It was always now. No matter what happened in your life, it was

always now.

Even that's a paradox to even say it. It was now. It doesn't even make sense.

But it was always now. Isn't that so there? And so we come to something very mysterious, that these actually are one.

And what we call the now, the present moment, is actually much deeper, something that contains a very deep mystery that you can never fully understand. We can only get a glimpse of what that means. This now is actually much deeper than we realized, because we thought that the present moment is what happens.

But what happens, happens in the field of now. It isn't the now. What happens changes continuously.

Things come and go and come and go. You leave here totally new experiences after you leave here. And so this is why people think one moment succeeds another moment and another moment and another moment.

That's not true. If you look more deeply, it's always one moment, this one. It's always this moment.

What changes is the form that this moment takes. That changes continuously. But because of the continuously changing forms that this moment takes, people believe there are thousands of moments every day.

Whereas, of course, everybody can verify in their own experience that there is only one moment ever. This moment. Your life was never and will never not be now.

And you will never not be yourself. So with the now, through the now we have access So with the now, through the now we have access to a deeper dimension in yourself that is one with the now. And the deepest statement I can make is something that you cannot fully understand through thinking about it.

But you can sense the truth of it. And that is, you are the now. And that is so perplexing, it actually stops the mind.

And that's a good thing. You can't think about this, because you wouldn't get anywhere. But there is a knowing that is possible for you through this pointer.

You are the now. This is, that's amazing. And then the mind, after a little while, the mind stops, and then it never stops for long.

And then the mind says, yeah, but what does that, does that actually mean anything? Now the mind would like, please, a little bit more explanation. Just a little bit more, please.

Why not? What is this now that never leaves you, that is one with the deepest sense of beingness, of I am? That Jesus pointed to when he said, before Abraham was, I am.

I am. That God pointed to, God is your deepest self, when God said, so to speak, I am that I am. That is God's self-definition.

And it is your self-definition, because at the deepest level of being, of I am, of now, you are one with the one. And what is the one? I will give you one other pointer, but we need to be very careful with pointers that point to a reality within yourself that cannot be understood through thinking.

And yet we are using thought to point to it, no more. So one needs to be careful so that a pointer does not become transformed into some new belief without the realization. So what is this I am, this now, that which never leaves you, that which always and eternally is, we could say, it's the essence of all life, before life becomes a form of life.

All forms come out of one life. There's life, and what you see around you are forms of life, the one life, the one consciousness, the primal, primordial intelligence, that permeates the entire universe, your body, everything, the one intelligence, the one consciousness is that. And it cannot be known through thinking about it.

Of course not. You cannot understand it as such. You can get little glimpses of, oh.

But the knowing of it comes from a deeper place. Now what do you have to do to know this for yourself? Just, you already know it.

It is not new knowledge. It is the most fundamental knowing, the basis of all knowing is that. And it is who you are.

And it is there when the continuous dream of thinking for a moment subsides. And what is left, you don't remember, in other words, you don't remember your story for a moment, your problems, the next thing that you have to do tomorrow or tonight, and all this stuff associated with your life situation, which isn't now at all. Your life situation is complicated and problematic, I know that, because every life situation is.

But that complexity cannot be now. Now is always very simple. Just this.

There is nothing complex about this moment. Can't be. Because it is only this.

It can be challenging, yes, something I need to deal with right now, and it happens, action happens, yes. But complicated, it can't be complicated. The now is too simple.

There is just, well, there are so many things, I don't know what to do first. Well, you have to do one thing. You can't do more than one thing now.

Do this. So if you step out of thought, you step out of past and future into now, and this

is the access point, the access point into the new state of consciousness, which isn't new at all. It's just a way of speaking.

It's new to you. It's new to humanity, largely, although the great teachers already pointed to it, but it never was realized on any large scale. Amazing that there is this dimension in you that is accessible only through the portal of the present moment, because it is inseparable.

This moment is inseparable from being itself, from who you are at the deepest level. So all that is required is for you to realize that this portal is always there. It's called the now.

And you will feel you're being pulled away from it continuously through the movement of thought. And then you suffer again. Some form of your life will become problematic again.

And then you remember, okay, what's the problem at this moment? With that question, it's kind of a useful question, comes an alertness. What is alertness?

It is consciousness without thought. It happens to some people in a moment of danger. They're suddenly confronted with danger.

Thought cannot cope with it anymore. It has no experience of the situation. Thought, sometimes in dangerous situations, when your life is threatened, thought suddenly collapses, and you go...

And fear also goes. People have reported after their lives were threatened by some imminent accident, for example, or they were hanging on a cliff wall. What is there to think about?

You can't think. And no right action is going to come out of thought at that critical emergency situation. All you can...

Thought subsides. It gets out of the way. And an intense alertness and aliveness takes over.

Stillness. It is a stillness too, but there's an intensity to that stillness. And out of that, which is the unconditioned intelligence in you, that is the, one could call the I am-ness that is now emerged.

It's the unconditioned consciousness itself. Out of that, right action happens, and it's not premeditated. There's no decision-making involved.

It is spontaneous. And then the old... When the emergency is over, the old thought-dominated state of consciousness comes back.

Oh. And then the next thing is, you begin to remember your problems again. But then

you remember also, for that moment you were actually, you lived in a state of blissful clarity.

And some people have that when they, an illness comes that may be life-threatening. Life-threatening is an expression that's ultimately a delusion because life has no opposite. People think life and death doesn't exist.

Birth and death, yes. Life has no opposite. An illness comes and you may only have a few more weeks or months to live.

That can also wake you up out of identification with the story, because the story becomes so burdensome and unhappy that you cannot live with the story of me anymore because I haven't got enough time to find myself in the story anymore. And it pushes you out of identification with that mind movement. And suddenly it's, I have seen people who may not have much longer to live, that applies to all of us because it doesn't really make much difference, a year, 20 years, 50 years.

It's over quickly. The ego says, oh, I've still got time. I've time to find myself.

No, you haven't. Because you can't find yourself in time. Either you find yourself in the now or you don't find yourself.

So it ultimately does not matter how much more time you have. Oh, that's a relief. Because the mind says, time is a critical factor to my existence.

I'm not going to make it without more time. So be stepping, when something you're confronted with death, that can also do it. Or in, let's take more everyday situations, the greatest sportsmen know that there is a state of absolute presence when they are exercising, whatever sport they do, there is the zone, as they sometimes call it, and they enter the zone and everything happens by itself.

Something else takes over and right action, there's no thinking involved anymore, not a single thought, but right action flows out of a deeper level of consciousness. It plays. It takes over.

And I believe that is probably the reason why people love watching some sports. Some sports are watched because of ego identification with their team. That's one of the many ways in which the ego gets a little high or low, whatever it may be.

We won. Who is we? Well, my team.

What did you do? Well, I just sat there. But...

So I don't mean people watching sports to get some little ego boost, but people watching sports because it is very satisfying to watch an action that is being performed out of the state of presence, of no thought, of absolute alertness. And it is beautiful to watch. And

that may be why people love watching tennis for hours.

All they are really watching is two people hitting a ball. And when I saw it first, I said, why is it that people love to watch that for hours? They are always hitting a ball.

And then I started watching, and I could sense at times that the tennis players were in that state of the flow was there. And sometimes when you watch that, you get a little bit of that, you get a taste of that when you see it in someone else. That's perhaps why people love watching that.

So there is that state that some artists also have, out of which they create. They don't create by thinking, OK, what clever thing can I paint here now? What about putting a little structure?

Well, some artists do, but it won't be very great. I can do a little dot. Should I put the dot here or the dot there?

Great art doesn't happen in that way. Great art happens when you become present. No past, no future.

Not even thinking about, what am I going to do? So just an alertness arises. Now, there is only this moment.

All creation comes out of that space of now, that space of unconditioned consciousness to which the portal is now. So the artist sits in front of the canvas, or whatever the medium may be, and looks, if visual is involved, the artist looks. And in that looking, there is an intense alertness.

In that looking, there is no thinking. Even the writer, the creative impulse out of which the words come, is that state of simple looking or listening. In writers, one could compare it more to a listening.

An alertness. A simple, alert presence. And out of that state, which is ultimately a state of no thought, comes the movement, a creative movement.

The hand moves. Or, the mind begins to move. If I'm a writer, and suddenly, words are beginning to form.

And that's a strange transition from a deep knowing of what you want to write. It's already there at a pre-verbal state. It has not taken form completely.

It comes out of the formless. It's a birth of form. It comes out of that, and then it becomes finally, and then it becomes a word.

And you write it. I do this movement, because I'm one of the few writers left who have used a pen. Most people, it finally goes into...

But it's the beauty of that. And so there are certain people that are called creative or great. Even...

You'll probably laugh, but I saw Michael Jackson on TV the other day. And even if you say he's strange and weird, that's what people say, there's one strange thing that happens. The moment he goes into the music mode, something takes over.

Wow, what is that? And he actually said you can't think. You cannot think.

It doesn't come from thinking. You can't learn it. You can learn the externals, yes, but not the essence.

So the moment he switches into the music mode, an energy takes over, and it's beautiful. And the moment he stops, an ordinary, strange human being, well, everybody is strange. Some are more strange than others.

So the question is, is it possible not to just have access to that in a little area of one's life, but to bring that into one's life? Yes, this is what all the ancient teachings have pointed to. It is possible to live in that state in which you are no longer the instrument of the conditioned, a puppet of your conditioning.

Something emerges from within you that is deeper than the form, the conditioned mind form that you thought was you. And that emerges. The more we become aligned with the present moment, and it requires simply, very often, to remember that the present moment is all you ever have, and then direct your attention to it.

How? Simply by becoming aware of your sense perceptions. There's an enormous looking and listening sound like relatively insignificant words, but what we call here looking and listening, there's enormous power in the ability to look and the ability to listen.

But it must be true looking and true listening, which is the alert presence of just, and it's still just that. And then, if action is required, it comes. You may be listening to another human being.

The most beautiful thing you can do is to listen to another human being who is speaking. And in true listening, there's an alert presence, a field of aware presence, a field of consciousness. And that unites you with the other person.

That is a unifying field. It is beyond thought. So what we are pointing to here, everybody here knows what I mean.

Everybody here has already had glimpses of that and perhaps not even realized the importance of it. To realize that perhaps the incredible importance of looking, you may find yourself looking at a tree and not commenting on it mentally inside. Not saying

anything about it.

A simple aware looking. So there's the tree and there is the presence through which the perception happens. And usually you would be identified with that which you are perceiving.

You would go into, it becomes translated into thought, interpreted, judged, compared to this or that. This tree would look good in my garden. It's called such and such.

My Aunt Mary had a similar tree. I wonder when it's going to flower. How old is it?

You're not really looking. That may have its place for certain things, but if you really want to know the tree, you have to look. And everyone here, it is so simple, has that ability to be alert, to look and to listen without having to be pushed by life into an emergency situation where you have no choice anymore.

You just have to be present because you're hanging by a thread on a cliff wall. Okay, are you going to do it now? Okay.

It sounds to the mind, it doesn't sound important. The most incredible transformation happens if you're able to even perform a little movement without the interference of thinking. And in many of you, this is already happening.

And you feel this as peace. While you do it, there is a peace in the doing. This is really what it is.

So you lift up a glass or you pour yourself a drink, hopefully not whiskey, or there's nothing wrong with that, but usually as presence emerges, it can easily become obscured again through becoming intoxicated. While you pour the water, there's simply an alert field of presence in which the action happens. To the mind, that is not important because the mind says, well, come on, I've got other problems in my life than pouring a glass of water in a state of alert presence.

And yet that is the way out of all the ultimately mind-created problems in your life when this is the emergence of an intelligence that is not conditioned. This is what all the whole teaching of Zen points to. To be utterly and completely here, now, in this moment.

And to look and to listen. That is the Zen master. One master of Zen just said, when asked, what is Zen, said, doing one thing at a time.

One thing at a time. And then the questioner said, okay, anything else? And then what?

After you've done the one thing, what do you do then? Another definition of Zen, which Zen is simply already, I don't really know how alive Zen still is these days, but it was a beautiful emergence when Zen came into being of what is possible, the transformation of human consciousness that is possible. It came through that vehicle that we call Zen.

It came through Jesus in other forms. What was the Zen master's definition when asked about what is Zen, what is the essence of Zen? Can please explain it to us?

And this master became famous because all he ever did was he would raise his finger and look at you. Please explain to me the meaning of Zen. And some got it.

Then the mind, once you have access to that dimension, the mind becomes a beautiful tool, no longer a problem, because you are the presence. You are the aware, conscious presence in which your sense perceptions happen, in which the things that happen to you in your life happen. Things come, things go.

It's always now, always a deep sense of beingness, of presence in which things happen. So you know yourself as ultimately consciousness, which is formless, timeless, eternal. One could say it is the light of God, the light of the source, but the light is not separate from the source, just as the sunlight is not separate from the sun, ultimately.

It is an extension of the sun. One could almost say we still live within the field of the sun. In the same way, we could say consciousness is formless and timeless.

Then, out of it, forms come, are born. And the first form that is born will be a thought, and then it subsides again, and consciousness remains, and a sense perception happens. Now, if you can sense that, while you go about your life, interact with people, perceive things, have experiences, play with things, you can not lose yourself in the world of form, which is thought, which is emotion, which is the entire sense-perceived world around you, which has such pull.

Give me your attention. The world says, this matters, this matters, that matters. Give me all your attention.

And it pulls you in, and every thought pulls you in, because ultimately, the world, the human world, is the world of thought. Every thought pulls you in, and says, think about this, this matters, it's so important. What am I going to do tomorrow?

This is going, what am I going to do? Nothing. It's not here now, but that's how thought operates.

And it pulls you in. It's easy to lose oneself in the world, which is ultimately the world of things, the world of form. Not only things on a conventional level of things, and that's enough, how many people's lives, especially in the highly developed countries, how many people's lives are almost completely consumed by things?

One thing after another to worry about. It's so complex. Every person has this.

So many things in my life that I need to give attention. I'm not saying, don't do it anymore, but don't lose yourself in the world of things. Easy.

Things on one level is possessions. Things on another level is situations and circumstances in your life. Things on another level is all the thoughts that go through your mind.

Are they also things? Yes, they are form. Forms that consciousness takes.

And it's very easy to lose yourself completely in that, become totally identified with that. And this is how people live. It's a dreadful way to live.

One damn thing after another. For many people, that is how they experience their life. Why can't life leave me alone?

One damn thing after another was Churchill's definition of history. And of course he was right. It's both human history is one damn thing after another and every individual life is one damn thing after another.

It doesn't have to be like that. But it's these things, the world of form that is, has an enormous pull. A gravity, one could almost say, a gravitational pull.

And so you get easy, just start thinking about, if you have investments, you can notice it when you start thinking about the stock market, how it pulls you in. And you can, and how it pulled you in when it all, it lost so much not long ago. How that, if you had, if you were unlucky enough to have things there.

But wherever your things are, they'll pull you in. Now if you can deal with things without losing yourself in things and remaining aware of what? Remaining aware, one way of putting it is to say, remaining aware of the space of the present moment in which all things happen.

And that is immediately, when your attention moves into now, there's a little bit of stillness. And it feels good. And you realize, the now is actually not bad at all.

I just thought it was dreadful. My life was dreadful. But when I wake up into this moment of my life, it's not actually that dreadful.

Oh. Another way of putting it is, if while you perceive, deal with things, interact with people, you can be aware of yourself perceiving, interacting, dealing with things. What does that mean?

Being aware of yourself, it does not mean being aware of yourself as the walking story. It does not mean thinking about me and my problems. As you sit here and listen to this voice, and this is the key, can you be aware of yourself as the aware presence through which the voice is being perceived?

That means you are not losing yourself in that which you are perceiving. Because otherwise, if you're sitting there and lose touch with yourself as the aware presence, you

will put all your attention onto the speaker and the voice. And you will expect something from the speaker.

And in this case, it's the speaker. It could be anything. Any experience, any perception.

But then you will expect something from the speaker in this situation that the speaker cannot give you. You would expect to be given to find yourself in something the speaker says. To find yourself in some new information or to project onto the speaker something that the speaker cannot possibly be.

You could say, you are the messiah. You have lost yourself and you have made the speaker into a special object that you seek to derive some kind of self-fulfillment from. Because then you won't stop there.

If you say you are the messiah, the next step would be that you are one of the followers. One of the chosen. And that's great.

More ego food. And restarting all over again. A new religion.

3,000 years later. Same place. So, here again, if you have been sitting here not knowing yourself as that, not sensing the aware presence, that is your entire being is part of that aware presence.

Then, it would have been boring to sit here. What is the speaker? The speaker will, at first, he might be a little bit entertaining.

But after a little while, then the speaker will become no longer, if he isn't the messiah, then he is no longer interesting to me. He hasn't given me what I was looking for. And then you go into another experience wherever, which also will not give you what you were looking for.

Although a few experiences will have the appearance as if they were giving you what you were looking for, yourself, ultimately. And then you will always be disappointed because after a little while, say, oh, that was an illusion. I fell for it.

He deceived me. He let me down. This is how it happens when sects and other organizations come into being.

They make one person special. He can give it to me. And then after a while, it doesn't work.

And he said, he let me down. You can come here, sit here for this evening, and go away and say, well, the speaker let me down. He didn't give me myself.

You wouldn't say that because it's an unconscious movement of looking for oneself. I thought he would give us six techniques of that and eight steps to this and 14, 14 this

and 16 that. But we didn't get any of this.

And we walked out empty handed. And that's because you were looking for something that nothing and nobody can give you. But if you could sit here as knowing yourself as the aware presence in which this experience happens, sensing the field of now, which is the same, sensing the field in which this perception happens.

One early 20th century teacher called it self-remembering, which can easily be misunderstood. And people might think they have to think about themselves. It's not that.

It's deeper than that. So then you realize that the speaker never had anything to give you, nor did you need anything of what really matters, which is yourself, of the essence of your being. And then to walk away here empty handed will be a beautiful thing.

Very empty. So much so that there is one religion that used that word emptiness to describe the ultimate that a human being can realize. And then the scholars come, Buddhism, for those of you who don't know, uses that word emptiness as the ultimate.

Buddha used it. And the scholars come and start thinking about what that could possibly mean. And then they come up with strange things, theories, like the academics who study Buddhism, not anymore perhaps because Buddhism is more alive in the West now, but when it first came in the 19th century, the scholars came and studied.

Buddha said emptiness. And then this professor of theology wrote, Buddhism is a nihilistic, life-denying belief system, atheistic belief structure. Every word is wrong, but that's how it was.

All he was, he just used another pointer. He said emptiness, it's not a very inspiring term, of course, emptiness. Hmm, what do I do with that?

Unless you realize it, it's meaningless. What is emptiness? What is this knowing yourself as the space, that's a good word, space in which everything happens.

You are that space. And so we have, one could say, the world of thought and the world of things that become translated into thoughts, which we could call object consciousness, the consciousness of objects, where consciousness becomes objects. For most people, that's all there is.

That's what their life consists of, things, stuck full with things, object consciousness, with one thing after another. Okay, what do we have to do now? What's the next thing to do?

And the mind never stops, except when they go to fall to sleep. In the last moments when you drop off, you have a little bit of peace because you're falling towards unconsciousness. But it's better than being tortured by your mind and you go, oh, oh.

And you might sit there after being tortured by your mind all day long. You get home, you pour yourself a whiskey and you drink it. And then gradually, you're moving towards unconsciousness.

And then for the first time in that day, you experience a little bit of peace that comes when the mind slows down and stops. But you are falling, one could say, below thought. But it's better than perhaps being tortured.

But this is not where we are going. We are not going to the level of animals or vegetables. It's beautiful for an animal to be an animal.

It's perfect. In many ways, more perfect than any human. Trees, vegetables, beautiful expressions of consciousness in their own way.

It is the destiny of humans to go beyond thought, not to fall back below thought. And many things that you take that give you a little relief from your mind tend to be things that take you towards unconsciousness, towards sleep. But there's no need to go there.

Here we are going beyond. And we are finding a stillness and a peace without loss of consciousness. In fact, a deeper consciousness.

Otherwise, nobody, almost nobody would want to give up being human. If you just said, if I asked you, if you could have inner peace, because that is one aspect of what we are talking about, knowing that is finding the dimension of inner peace, which is the dimension of the formless consciousness within yourself. Inner peace at any price?

No. Would you rather be an unhappy human or a happy cow? Not that many cows these days are happy because cows are being treated abominably by humans.

Abominably by humans. That is, if I had to be a cow, I would live in India or in Switzerland. But very few humans would say, I would rather be a happy cow without any problems than an unhappy human.

You don't want to give up being human. So inner peace, not at the cost of loss of consciousness. Cow is a beautiful being, closer to the source than humans, just as everything in nature is.

It hasn't removed, it hasn't gone out that far yet, not as far as humans from the source of all life. More deeply, more intimately connected with the source of all life. Every animal, every tree, every flower, and they are all expressions of the one consciousness and they are all closer to God if God is the one, the source, than any human, except those humans who are finding their way back.

But finding their way back is not going back to the level of it's going beyond. So when true inner peace is there, there is a deep knowing that comes with it, an awareness, a

presence. We had, as humanity as a whole, had to move through thought, being lost in thought.

They had to go through that, otherwise it wouldn't have happened. There's nothing that happens that is not meant to happen because the totality has brought this about. This applies to everything.

It applies to every event. Humanity had to go through the suffering, self-inflicted to a large extent. The suffering of humanity, the greater part of it, is completely self-inflicted.

Humans are doing it to themselves, to each other. And we had to go through that and it was to do with losing yourself in thought. It all started with, in mythology, myth tells us, and there's deep truth in it, that two human beings ate of the tree, the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Good, bad. I like this, I don't like that. That's right, that thinking starts.

They ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And at first it was a beautiful thing. You become powerful, they became powerful through that, and more and more, they lost themselves in it also, in thought.

They lost their deep connection with the source, with themselves, with the divine. Paradise was lost. And paradise can be regained.

Now that we have, humanity has arrived at a very critical stage in its development, because mind, the human mind, human thinking has proliferated enormously through science, through technology, and all the things that science and technology creates. Not that in itself it is bad or good, but it is an extension of thought. And if thought is not rooted in the deeper levels of pure consciousness, of awareness, of presence, thought becomes mad.

Thought becomes self-serving. Ego. Human life becomes dominated by ego, personal and collective.

And so, that's the way humanity went. What seems certain now is, if there's no transformation of consciousness in humanity, mankind or humankind probably will not make it as a species, and some other species will replace it. And consciousness can take any form, it doesn't mind.

It loves playing with forms. It says, OK, humans, let's drop that. We tried that.

And nothing is lost. There's only one life. Billions of forms of life, all come and go.

And yet, the possibility is here of the flowering of human consciousness, of a new, one could say, words are always limited, a new level in human evolution, where life on this planet is not made into a hell, because potentially, it is a paradise. The planet is a

paradise. The planet is pure, pristine, a jewel of just unbelievable.

And the same, what have humans done to it, especially the past hundred years? Because of the proliferation of, magnification of thoughts through science. Poisons everywhere, eradication of nature, madness.

But it is a beautiful, divine being, the planet. And this is just an external expression of what each human being has done within. They are, in their essence, pure, beautiful, alive.

And that remains, that level of pure consciousness remains in every human. The inner peace is there in every human, covered up by toxic substances, toxic thinking, ego-dominated thinking, self-seeking through thought, me, me, them, must have more, more, more, more. Enemy, where is the enemy?

We are moving out of that. The quickest way to this realization, and it's so quick that it doesn't require any time, is what we've already pointed to here, to many times tonight, an inner alignment with life. Life is now.

Not to make this moment into an enemy, to say yes to it, to welcome it, to allow it to be, that's really enough. And if you're still questioning the wisdom, and still saying, why should I do that? Whatever happens at any moment, which is only the one moment, whatever happens in your life, appears to be a separate event.

This happens, and then that happens. But if you look, physicists who have studied, who have looked beyond the surface appearance of things, found that the entire universe is interconnected. The actual, what seems like a separation between different things, does not ultimately exist.

It is a web of interconnectedness. The entire cosmos is one. Everything is connected to everything else.

Buddhists have always spoken of this, for 2,600 years, of the interconnectedness of all things. And so, if something happens at this moment, it cannot not be. It is inevitable.

Anything that is, has an inevitability to it. Because the entire cosmos has brought this event about. So, to not be aligned with it internally, is to cut yourself off from the flow of intelligence that expresses itself as the universe.

And to be aligned with what is, is to be also in alignment with the one intelligence. Which then flows through you and will affect what you do. It will do through you.

You are not separate from it. That's when life gets so much easier. I don't have to struggle with all that.

I don't. Not the little I. Through the simple act of surrender, which is ultimately what we

are talking about.

There's great beauty and power in that. Only the little me says, don't surrender. Surrender.

Just to this moment. Become aligned with that. And see there is a beauty in everything.

Even in death. Because death happens. The end of a form.

A form dissolves. You become aligned with that. That is the spiritual practice.

That is the essence of all teachings. If you really look deep enough. To live in alignment with life.

And your, whatever form this moment takes, even if it seems to be a limitation on you. Which is often the case. I don't want to be here in this place.

I want to be somewhere else. I don't want to be stuck here. I want to be somewhere else.

I don't want to. Very often this moment can be perceived as a limitation. And of course in some ways it is.

The body may become limited. Maybe the body may get old. You can't move anymore the way you did.

Your very body can become a limitation. There are certain things that are as they are. And enormous change happens when you accept them as they are.

It's not defeat. It's not accept. I am ill.

Just this moment. Not the idea of I am this or I am that. Only this moment you need to accept.

Oh, just this. And then there is a beauty in whatever happens. And with that comes a gratefulness for what is.

It can be a gratefulness for the tiniest things that otherwise you would have overlooked. A gratefulness for the table that you touch. Its being.

A little flower. A glass of water. Not that you have to think I am grateful.

It's a natural way in which you interact with the world. You are grateful for what is. The beingness.

Without self-seeking. Seeking yourself in it. And then your life improves dramatically.

The moment that gratefulness comes for whatever is, you are already abundant. You already have abundant life. The expression that Jesus used.

I want you to have life. And I want you to have it abundantly. Jesus said abundant life.

He said the depth of life. The depth of aliveness. He was not talking about more things.

Not that kind of abundance. He did not say I promise you consumer goods and shopping malls. Because when we speak of abundance, we think more things.

No, deeper. So the abundance, even if you only have one object or two objects in your life, you give them attention. You look, you touch.

And when you give attention, don't use them as a means to an end or some kind of self-story around it and say, look at me, I'm such and such an age and all I can afford is this little table. Or the opposite. Look how big my table is.

Not that kind of attention. No, pure simply to give something an attention without self, just attention, acknowledge its being. Look at it, touch it, pick it up, see it.

Immediately when you give something attention, a gratefulness comes with that, an aliveness. That's abundance. And then, because it's the depth of abundance, that is abundant life.

Ultimately you're getting in touch with that which is beyond form in you. And then the forms in your life are little addings on, icing on the cake. Not necessary, but quite nice when they come.

And not that bad when they go. That's the play of form, the dance of form. And that dance as you leave here continues.

You step out of here and the dance of your life and the forms of your life continues. Why not participate in it? It's not deadly serious when you don't need this to be in a certain way anymore.

Just play with the things of your life and give attention to this, just what is. And there is a depth in what is that's deeper than the form. And that really gives the form its beauty, its aliveness.

The depth is in you. Yes to what is connects you with that depth. It seems so simple.

How can that be? The inner yes to what is connects you with that depth in you. That is where you and the one life, the one consciousness that we could call God are one.

No separation. Formless form. You are the bridge.

Your home is the formless. But for a little while you move between the form and the formless. But you need to come to an acceptance of the forms in the now.

Even if they appear limiting, accept first and then see what happens. Then they change.

Accept first, no matter how limiting it seems.

The ultimate limitation is the cross, the crucifixion. The cross, how can one accept being crucified to a cross? Can't accept that.

But this being that is you ultimately, each one of you, accepted the most extreme form of limitation. Torture instrument, the cross, the torture instrument, said, not my will, but thy will be done. Thy will, whose will?

The one. The will of the one that brought this event about. And the torture instrument suddenly became a symbol for the divine.

And you don't need to be a Christian to understand that. Most Christians have a limited understanding of what that means. The torture instrument suddenly becomes an opening and becomes a symbol for the divine.

They are one. The greatest limitation, when totally accepted, becomes the opening. So if there's still suffering in your life, and if there's acute suffering in your life, the greatest limitation can become the opening.

But it may be that you don't need that much suffering anymore. You've had enough. There's nothing you need to remember.

Let's be still a moment, and simply allow this moment to be. Be.

[Speaker 3] (2:18:09 - 2:18:11)

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.